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ABSTRACT

Monroe Community College (MCC) is located in a county with over one million residents, where over 40% of the workforce is employed in manufacturing and where a number of major corporations are engaged in high technology production. Strong links existing between MCC and local industry are illustrated by the degree programs offered in high technology areas and the courses tailored to the needs of local businesses. In recent years, the college has actively sought financial support from local corporations to offset cutbacks in other funding sources. MCC's approach to soliciting corporate support has included: (1) a high-level administrative commitment to seeking corporate funds; (2) the appointment of individuals with responsibility for soliciting funds; (3) the establishment of a foundation for obtaining and distributing funds; (4) the matching of demonstrable college needs to the self-interests of corporations; and (5) the develoopment of contacts between company executives and board of trustee members, the college president, senior administrators, and faculty. Most of MCC's efforts have involved the solicitation of funds for a specific purpose, such as special programs, equipment items, training activities, financial aid for students, or physical space for a program or course. Although much of the fund-raising work in the past has arisen from spontaneous contacts, MCC is now engaged in the planned solicitation of corporate funds. (HB)

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Corporate Solicitation - SUNY Style

A Two-Year Urban Campus' Approach to Corporate Giving

by

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Paper presented at the State University of New York Conference
"A Perspective on Corporate Giving"
Corning, New York
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Corporate Solicitation - SUNY Style

A Two-Year Urban Campus' Approach to Corporate Giving

November 9, 1982

Introduction

This presentation will focus upon a public urban community college's approach to corporate giving, namely that of Monroe Community College in Rochester, New York. Hopefully, some of the comments and observations will apply to other two-year and possibly four-year colleges, whether located in an urban setting or not -- but the emphasis is on a community college in an urban setting.

The president of my institution recently commented that "corporate giving" is all well and good, but that he is more interested in "corporate getting." You and/or your presidents may have the same attitude.

I intend to discuss community college linkages with corporations. The corporations are willing to give, and we should be willing to get. The key, of course, is matching the college needs, whether they be programs, activities, events, facilities, services, whatever, with the corporation's interests, keeping in mind that most corporations espouse the concept of enlightened self-interest.

Again, at the risk of being somewhat parochial, I will be using Monroe Community College as an example, trusting you will not be offended and, in fact, will be able to apply some of these thoughts to your particular institution or situation. Also, I freely admit we're quite new at the development business, and some of you may find my remarks obvious or elementary. In that case, I beg your indul ence, but I've made the assumption that some here today, especially

Introduction (cont.)

community college staff members, are either contemplating initiating active development efforts or are accelerating your current, perhaps passive, development activities.

Background

Now, just a bit more background.

Monroe County, in which the City of Rochester and MCC are located, is an urban, high technology community representing a thriving, even in these days (we won't mention Xerox), economic area of over one million people. There are nearly 1,000 industries in the Rochester area. Many are major international producers of photographic products, optical systems, fuel control devices, sophisticated machine tools, copying equipment, mass transportation control systems, electrical and electronic components and systems, and sophisticated medical and dental equipment.

Maybe you've heard of some of the corporations providing these goods and products -- Bausch & Lomb, Delco, General Railway Signal, Gleason Works, Harris Corporation/RF Communications Division, Itek, Kodak, Ritter Dental Company, Sybron, Sykes Datatronics, Wollensak Optical, Xerox, to name just a few.

The Rochester/Monroe County area has a higher percentage of highly skilled employed persons than almost all other metropolitan areas of the U.S. One out of three employed persons is classified as a professional, a technician, a scientist, craftsman, or foreman. Further, the productivity of Rochester

Background (cont.)

area manufacturers is the highest in the country. The 1981-82 output of $79,554 per factory worker is higher than any other city in the U.S. Over 40% of the work force is employed in manufacturing, placing Rochester second on the list of major industrial areas in the U.S. with over 100,000 persons employed in manufacturing.

This gives you a brief overview of the industrial/corporate base in our community. Almost sounds as if I work for the Monroe County Convention Bureau or the Chamber of Commerce! But my point, simply, is that to be effective in community college development activities, you must know your community and its employee needs, both current and future.

At its very essence, the local community college exists to supply some of these employee needs. Hence, a very natural, almost ripe for exploitation, relationship should exist between the community college and the industries and businesses within its geographical area.

For example, since MCC is located in a high tech center, it is no surprise that we offer very successful degree programs in Electronics, Quality and Reliability Technology, Mechanical Technology, Computer Science, Optical Engineering Technology, Biomedical Engineering Technology, Chemical Technology, Industrial Instrumentation Technology, Medical Laboratory Technology, Engineering Science, etc. In addition, we offer many individually tailored courses for local industries and businesses through an Employee Training and Development Program.

You undoubtedly have noticed that the programs we offer interface with the types of services provided and goods manufactured by the corporations in

Background (cont.)

Monroe County. This is a most natural springboard for us to use as we seek support from these same corporations -- corporations who hire so many of our graduates.

Funding Attitudes

However, until relatively recently, public colleges in New York State, including community colleges, have not capitalized on this relationship. Why? Because, speaking for community colleges, we were reluctant to compete with other local fund-raising organizations, including and especially private colleges and universities; we feared that, if successful, the local sponsor might decrease its support; we assumed corporations would be unwilling to contribute to a public community college; et cetera.

For reasons we are all familiar with, this "attitude" is changing. Should a public community college seek private funds? I believe the answer is "yes." I quote from an article on community college fund-raising in the Winter 1981 issue of Counsel published by the National Counsel for Community Relations -- "Given the economic facts of continued high inflation and budget reduction, public community colleges have only two choices. They can either continue to reduce programs and services in direct proportion to reduced local and state funding, or they can adopt new roles and with self-determination seek to supplement their declining resources."

Today, the climate is different. It is time to actively seek support from private sources. Both corporations and community colleges accept the concept of private support in addition to the traditional sources, such as local and state government, student tuition, and federal grants.

Funding Attitudes (cont.)

Today, when we are experiencing sweeping technological changes, industry needs higher education, including public institutions and including community colleges, to keep up, to provide training and education for their present and future employees. Corporations recognize this: corporate giving to higher education will exceed one billion dollars in 1982; it will exceed the total grants from all foundations; corporate donations of goods and services to higher education in 1982 will triple the value of corporate giving; and, furthermore, corporate giving to higher education will increase by about 25% in the next few years.

So, the climate has changed, and corporate giving is changing. The time is ripe for community colleges to capitalize on one of their greatest strengths, namely a perfectly natural programmatical relationship with the corporations in their communities.

Approaches

As suspected, there are many approaches that community colleges can take relative to seeking support from the private sector. The specific approach depends on several variables: the nature of the community, the community college's need, the corporation's interests, the specific type of support being sought, the size or amount of the request, the past and current support from the corporation, requests for one-shot versus recurring projects, etc. As I mentioned earlier, I'll outline some of the possible approaches by using our situation at Monroe Community College as an example.

Commitment at the Top: Of paramount importance to development efforts, including corporate "getting," is a commitment from the president of the community college and a clear understanding and agreement by the Board of

Commitment at the Top (cont.)

Trustees that, for the good of the college, support will be sought from private sources, e.g., corporations. Such commitment can result in the following:

1) Appointment or assignment of staff members to perform specific development activities. At MCC we have a Resource Development Office with two professional staff members, and part of their responsibilities include coordinating contacts with local corporations and businesses. Further, we have a second level officer, namely me, who is directly responsible for institutional advancement and can give top level support to development efforts taking place at all levels and across all divisions within the college.

Another result of top-level commitment is:

2) Awareness and support by the Board of Trustees. At MCC, several Board members are high ranking executives in local corporations or are retired executives, and their commitment to corporate support of MCC has abundantly obvious advantages. By the way, this is just another reason why Board members should be very carefully and thoughtfully selected, assuming your current Board members and president have some input into that political process.

A third and very important result:

3) Active contacts by the president himself.

Another result:

4) Foundations. Many community colleges have established or are in the process of establishing a college foundation, specifically for the purpose of soliciting and distributing funds from sources outside the traditional ones. At MCC, we are in the process of establishing a foundation.

Commitment at the Top (cont.)

5) Other administrative staff members, department chairs, and faculty sense this commitment from the president and the Board and, with their direction, are more able to assist in the process of obtaining corporate support.

These are just a few examples of the importance of top-level commitment and, in fact, illustrate an attitude and operational style necessary for effective corporate "getting."

Demonstrable Need: Another overriding factor contributing to successful corporate "getting" is to be able to demonstrate a need for whatever you are requesting from a corporation. Not only must you have a clearly demonstrated need, but you must match that need to the enlightened self-interest of the corporation. For example, at MCC, Kodak or Bausch & Lomb are natural contacts when we have a need in the optics program. For the same need, we are unlikely to contact Pennwalt Pharmaceutical.

Corporate Contacts: Let's be more specific. Who makes the contacts for the community college and how? As you undoubtedly know, there are all sorts of contact points which can lead to corporate gifts. It depends on several factors, including the particular need (for example, cash, equipment, human resources, a facility, etc.), organizational structure at both the college and the corporation, who knows whom, opportunities presenting themselves. etc. The contact can range from informal to formal, from small talk at a social gathering or on the golf course to a meticulously planned and executed program.

Corporate Contacts (cont.)

At MCC, we have many ways in which we solicit support from local industries. Let me mention some of them, and I should note that, although they may sound hierarchical, all combinations are possible.

1) A member of the Board of Trustees approaches the appropriate executive in a corporation.

2) The president contacts the chief executive officer or a key vice president in a firm.

3) A College vice president contacts an officer in a local corporation.

4) An academic dean or department chairman contacts a manager, supervisor, or other key employee.

5) A department chairman expresses a need to an advisory committee member who knows how his firm can meet that need.

6) A faculty member attends a meeting of the local chapter of his professional society and mentions a particular need to a friend attending the same meeting. The friend happens to work for a local corporation that could meet that need.

I am sure you have had similar experiences and, of course, as I mentioned earlier, there are many permutations of the above-mentioned contacts.

With one or two major exceptions, most of our experience to date has involved the solicitation of corporate support from the following: funds for a very specific program, a specific equipment item, a particular supply item, a special training activity, a consulting service, financial aid for students, or physical space for a course or program.

Corporate Contacts (cont.)

I must admit, a large proportion of our contacts have been spontaneous as opposed to planned. They have also been decentralized and somewhat uncoordinated -- almost a matter of taking advantage of opportunities that happened to present themselves. Up to now, the most common contact with local corporations has been by department chairs, usually through advisory committee members. These contacts have resulted mostly in the donation of equipment or supplies. I'll mention just a few specific items we have obtained in this manner: A Beckman gas chromatograph ($5,000), a nuclear magnetic resonance spectrophotometer ($40,000), free consulting services relative to a facilities rehabilitation project, a free two-day training workshop on using complicated technical equipment, annual donations of IV bottles for the Nursing Program, financial support of national sports tournaments hosted by the College, oscilloscopes ($7,500), an interferometer for optics ($8,000), and the list goes on and on.

We at MCC have made the most of spontaneous contacts, of the opportunities that have presented themselves. We don't lose out on too many, but I am reminded of a recent missed opportunity because of lack of internal communication, planning, and coordination. The spontaneous approach is no longer good enough, and we are now engaged in planned corporate "getting."

There is no doubt that the president sets the tone. He has established invaluable contacts with corporate and business leaders and other personnel. He is constantly reminding them of the continuing value of MCC's programs to their particular companies in terms of present and future employees. He is actively seeking their support, and they are responding in a variety of ways.

Corporate Contacts (cont.)

As an example, two computers were recently donated to MCC, largely because of the president's active role in presenting the College's need to firms which benefit directly from our programs.

The President's Cabinet, with input from other elements within the College, has established certain goals and priorities which can readily be translated into activities seeking corporate support. Various projects and options are now carefully planned through the division of institutional advancement, and the staff in the Office of Resource Development coordinate these activities.

Contacts with local firms can still be decentralized, and we still take advantage of the opportunities that we don't initiate, but now, more than ever before, we are centralizing and coordinating and planning our efforts of corporate "getting."

Department chairmen have been encourged to convey their needs to the Resource Development Office which then assists them, or, depending upon the need, some are communicated to the Vice President for Institutional Advancement and/or the President's Cabinet and to the President. Decisions can then be made relative to who should make the corporate contact, how much should be requested, when the contact should be made, how it should be made, and indeed, if it should be made.

In other words, we are more aggressively seeking a variety of support from the corporations in Monroe County. We no longer wait for the contact to happen by chance or circumstance; we now actively look for that donation. We anticipate that this approach will be much enhanced by the soon-to-be-established MCC Foundation and the addition of an executive director of the Foundation who will

Corporate Contacts (cont.)

add considerably to our ability to solicit from local corporations and will be an important link in our planned development activities.

We at MCC are fortunate to be located in an excellent high technology urban area where opportunities for corporate giving and getting abound. We intend to take advantage of this situation in the months and years ahead.

11/9/82

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